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PROGRAMS AND PROSPECTS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH--SCHOOL DROPOUTS AND HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATES.

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IN RECENT YEARS YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS HAVE PROLIFERATED, MAINLY AS A RESULT OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S EXPANDED ROLE IN THIS AREA. THE PROGRAMS ARE OF TWO BASIC TYPES--(1) VOCATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS WHICH PREPARE THE YOUTH FOR EMPLOYMENT BY EQUIPPING HIM WITH A PARTICULAR SKILL AND PROPER WORK HABITS AND (2) UPWARD MOBILITY PROGRAMS WHICH CONCENTRATE ON JOB AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRY TO UPGRADE THE DISADVANTAGED YOUTH BY OFFERING HIM VARIOUS SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES. THE JOB CORPS EMPHASIZES PLACEMENT RATHER THAN THE CREATION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, WHILE THE NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTH CORPS IS NOW MOVING AWAY FROM A PRIMARY CONCERN WITH SHORT-TERM EMPLOYMENT TO AN INTEREST IN TRAINING AND REMEDIATION FOR THE YOUTH. EVALUATIONS OF THE OUTCOMES OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS ARE UNSATISFACTORY BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY IN COLLECTING DATA, BUT THE QUESTION REMAINS WHETHER THESE PROGRAMS, EVEN PROPERLY IMPLEMENTED, CAN ALLEVIATE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT. IN FAILING TO RECOGNIZE THAT YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IS A FUNCTION OF THE AVAILABILITY OF JOBS, AND IN CONCENTRATING ON JOB TRAINING, THESE PROGRAMS DEAL WITH THE SYMPTOMS OF JOBLESSNESS RATHER THAN ITS CAUSES. TO RELIEVE THE CAUSES THESE YOUTH SHOULD BE OFFERED GREATER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH NEW JOBS OR THE RESTRUCTURING OF EXISTING ONES. A BIBLIOGRAPHY ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FOLLOWS THE DISCUSSION. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN THE "IRCD BULLETIN," VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 1966. (EF)

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EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PLANNING FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

Educational and social planning for adolescents from economically- and socially-disadvantaged backgrounds requires that differential attention be given to at least three sub-groups in this population. We must be concerned with those adolescents who drop out and lose their contact with the school prior to graduation. Planning must provide for those youth who, having terminated their formal education with high-school graduation, seek to enter the labor force. Increasing attention must be given to those young people who continue formal education beyond the secondary level in technical training, in commercial studies, or in higher education. In the identification of these sub-groups it should be noted that no category describes a status which is permanent for the incumbent. Indeed, an important goal of programs designed for school dropouts as well as high-school graduates is to provide services and opportunities which will encourage and enable them to further their education.

This issue of the Bulletin deals with programs and prospects for school dropouts and high-school graduates who have not had, and are not presently seeking, additional formal education. The focus of the current review article and the bibliography is on programs and problems of employment for these youth. The present issue does not include the growing body of work related to newly emerging sub-professional job categories or to career development. These areas as well as post high-school and higher education will be treated separately in future issues of the Bulletin.

We are indebted to members of the staff of the National Committee on Employment of Youth for assistance in the preparation of material for this issue.

E. W. G.

PROGRAMS AND PROSPECTS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH: SCHOOL DROPOUTS AND HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATES

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Gainful employment and higher education, the major socially-acceptable goals for out-of-school youth, are unattainable for many socially-disadvantaged young persons.[1] Many of these youth lack either the financial resources or the prior academic opportunities which facilitate college attendance for middle- and upper-income students. For many out-of-school youth, both graduates and drop-outs, the employment outlook is also bleak.

While it is generally assumed that a high-school graduate is less likely to be unemployed than a dropout, all young workers have a high rate of unemployment. According to the Special Labor Force Report No. 54, prepared by the Department of Labor, there were 7,758,000 persons between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one in the work force (either actively seeking employment or employed) in October 1964. Of these, 10.7 percent of the high-school graduates and 16.6 percent of the dropouts were unemployed. The unemployment rates of graduates, albeit sizeable, are lower than that of dropouts, but this relationship does not hold for the nonwhite subgroup. Surprisingly, in October 1964, the rate of unemployment for nonwhite graduates was slightly, though infinitesimally, higher than that for dropouts -- 21.1 percent for the former and 20.5 percent for the latter. Such evidence suggests that high-school graduation is less than an automatic entree to employment, particularly for the nonwhite youth.

These estimates of youth unemployment, although sizeable, greatly underestimate the actual number who are unaffiliated or tenuously attached to the two major institutions culturally prescribed for them. To begin with, many more than the number recorded in any one month (e.g. October 1964) were unemployed at some time during that year. In addition, it is impossible to determine the number of persons who are interested in and able to work unless they are actively seeking a job. For example, one study conducted in New Haven indicated that the number of young people not in school and not at work is about three times as high as the number calculated. Among these are persons, who, even at a young age, may have ceased to look for work because of the paucity of entry jobs or the marginality of those that do exist. Some youth are thus double

[1] *Military service, an acceptable occupation for youth eighteen and over, is also unattainable for many youth. One-third of all applicants, an anticipated 800,000 in 1965, were expected to be rejected. School dropouts comprise eighty percent of the rejectees.*

dropouts -- from school and the labor force.

Several years ago, when James Conant complained that the employment of youth was "literally nobody's affair," it would have been relatively simple to describe and evaluate programs for young people who were out-of-work or marginally at work. Since there were so few efforts, one would have alluded to pioneering activities like the Detroit Job Upgrading Program and to the public and voluntary employment and guidance services for youth. Most of the space would have been devoted to a statement of the problem -- an unprecedented increase in the number of young job seekers unfortunately coinciding with a decline in the availability of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs which were traditionally their entry to work.

The federal government's expanded role in the field of youth employment is responsible for a great increase in the scope as well as number of programs. The President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime, established in 1961, and subsequently, the Manpower Development and Training Act (especially through the special provisions for youth in the 1963 amendments) were the chief sources of funds for the large number of locally-administered youth-employment programs which have been developed in recent years. The major source of funds for the work programs of Mobilization for Youth in New York, for example, was the President's Committee, while a program such as Chicago's Job Opportunities through Better Skills (JOBS) operated under an MDTA grant.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 established two national youth-employment programs, the Job Corps and the Neighborhood Youth Corps, which are not only supported by the federal government but administered by it as well. The Job Corps is a residential training program reminiscent of the Civilian Conservation Corps of Depression days; it enrolled 40,000 youth in urban and rural training centers in 1965, its first year of operation. The Neighborhood Youth Corps provided short-term employment and limited ancillary services for 100,000 in- and out-of-school youth in fiscal 1965. In offering work experience on service projects in public and private non-profit organizations, it resembles another Depression program, the National Youth Administration.

In addition to these two new programs, the government has expanded the services of existing agencies, the state employment services (joint ventures of the states and the Department of Labor). The Youth Opportunity Centers, which are being established in over one-hundred metropolitan areas, are a response to the need for coordination of youth-employment programs as well as the result of long-standing criticism that the employment services were not sufficiently attuned to the special problems of impoverished youth. In addition to coordination, the Centers, which are now being established, will "reach out" to recruit youth and engage in job development as well as provide the testing, counseling, and placement services characteristic of such agencies.

As a result of the proliferation of youth-employment programs in recent years, the task of characterizing current activity is considerably more complicated now than at the beginning of the decade when Conant decried the inactivity. The following sections will describe the goals and concepts upon which most youth-employment programs are based and the status of research and evaluation of these programs. A final portion will consist of a critical assessment of current approaches to the problem of youth employment.

Goals and Concepts

A typology developed by the National Committee on Employment of Youth in a survey of programs in thirty-one communities (Youth Employment Programs in Perspective, 1965) appropriately characterizes the goals and the conceptual bases of most local programs. This classification scheme is relevant to an analysis of the two major federal programs, as well. Two principal types of program goals were identified -- "educational and vocational adjustment" and "upward mobility." The former category, which subsumes all but two of the programs studied, describes those in which "the major goal is to adjust the youth to the world of employment, to change him in the direction of employer specifications." The upward-mobility programs do not focus solely on employability, for there is a recognition that new employment opportunities must be created for disadvantaged youth.

The programs of vocational and educational adjustment are based on the assumption that unemployability inheres in the youth themselves, and they are viewed as being unable to perform well on any job because of poor work habits and attitudes, limited ability, and unrealistic notions about themselves and their vocational goals. The adjustment programs differ according to whether they focus on general preparation for work or on the acquisition of occupational skills. Thirty-three of the thirty-nine programs in the NCEY study were in the former category which emphasizes the acquisition of proper work habits, basic educational skills, and an understanding of the world of work. In contrast to the much more prevalent general-preparation group in which "skills are an afterthought," the occupational-skills programs focus on the acquisition of an elementary type of skill, reportedly one crucial to a job for which there is current demand. According to the NCEY staff, what distinguishes the two types of adjustment programs is a different view of the employment prospects of the youth served. Those which focus on general preparation for employment anticipate that they will be workers in unskilled service jobs, while planners of the skills programs picture them as semi-skilled workers in manufacturing jobs as well as employees in the service trades. Most programs have a mixture of the following features: work experience (in all but three in the NCEY study), remedial education, testing, counseling, and placement. The central tendency among these programs is toward work experience augmented by guidance.

The upward-mobility programs employ the methods of both types of adjustment programs, but there is also a focus on job and career development. Accordingly, attempts are made to upgrade skills, explore advanced training once a youth is employed, and facilitate advancement on the job. A major contribution of programs for upward mobility is the recognition that disadvantaged youth need more than a single

type of service. Rather, they require a "continuum of support" that starts before they enter their first job and continues beyond it. Despite their ambitiousness (for example, the Work Programs of Mobilization for Youth) and their recognition of the social conditions affecting youth employment, they have, in the opinion of the NCEY observers, "merely pushed the idea of service to its furthest limits, but they are still compensatory." They cannot effect major changes in educational, social, and economic institutions that would remove the employment handicaps of the disadvantaged.

How does this typology, originally developed in a study of local work programs, apply to the federal programs which have been implemented subsequently? The Job Corps, despite its institutional-training component and its elaborate training facilities that would be the envy of any vocational school, could probably be characterized as an upward-mobility program in that it employs not only both kinds of work-adjustment techniques but a wide range of other services: medical, remedial, recreational, and mental health. In one type of training facility, the rural centers for men, the emphasis is on remedial education and work experience in conservation, while in the urban centers, the acquisition of occupational skills is emphasized. Youth who are most retarded in academic subjects are referred to the rural centers, but inasmuch as most of the enrollees will not be employed in conservation or related fields, occupational training is not the goal of the work experience. Once basic school skills have been improved, it is possible for some youth to be transferred to one of the urban centers for occupational training.

The Job Corps emphasizes placement rather than job development or the creation of new employment opportunities. Thus the Corps takes the position that while jobs cannot be guaranteed to all enrollees who have completed training, "every effort will be made ... to assist each graduate in learning of job opportunities for which he is qualified." According to Job Corps staff, a portion of the first group of Corps graduates are attempting to upgrade their skills beyond the level acquired in the Corps by enrolling in MDTA and other training programs following their graduation. It is too early to assess the involvement of the Corps in job and career development of trainees following departure from the Corps. Yet, it would appear that the Corps is less concerned with the social conditions affecting youth employment and probably less involved in upgrading after graduation than some of the more ambitious local upward-mobility programs, despite the ways in which it resembles them in program input.

The enabling legislation for the Neighborhood Youth Corps alluded to the increase of employability through work experience and training; however, the Department of Labor, which administers the program, originally stipulated that seventy percent of the federal financial share (up to ninety percent of total expenditures for a local program) must be used for the salaries of youth. Inasmuch as training programs usually need to spend at least half of their funds for services to the youth and administration, the effect was to provide short-term employment (six months) rather than training.

Concluding that many of the youth in the NYC required basic education and work-adjustment services, the administrators have developed a more flexible policy. There is now a suggested guideline of forty percent of federal funds for expenses other than youngsters' salaries. Also, NYC employment may now be extended up to two years, providing that the youth is receiving training and/or remediation.

It is too early to determine how these modifications will affect the development of the NYC, which has been criticized for its "lean" approach to services as well as for the design of the work experiences. (It has been maintained that the projects were hastily developed and that youngsters frequently came to work before plans were well formulated or their employers or supervisors were prepared for them.) It would seem, however, that the NYC has moved away from short-term employment and toward some form of work-adjustment program. It is not clear whether training or the work experience will be geared to the acquisition of specific skills or whether the emphasis will be entirely on general preparation for work.

Research and Evaluation

The status of research and evaluation for youth-employment programs has changed from nearly nonexistent to unsatisfactory. In the 1962-63 period, the NCEY survey reported that "the majority have no research design (although there are notable exceptions such as Mobilization for Youth)." Recently, Melvin Herman, director of two research programs dealing with unemployed youth, has maintained that "careful and responsible evaluations have not yet been performed anywhere nationally, in spite of the considerable resources sometimes allocated for this purpose." Some of the barriers to effective evaluation, according to Dr. Herman, are serious deficiencies in "defining criteria for success, collecting accurate and complete data, and generating reasonable conclusions." Other observers have noted the barriers to "monitoring program input." S.M. Miller has pointed out that "the programmatic outline of activities is used as the description of input. Closer examination all too often reveals that what occurs in a program is far different from what is planned, perceived, or reported."

Partly underlying difficulties in mounting satisfactory research and evaluation programs are major differences in the goals of action and research staff. The social scientist, who may be interested primarily in basic research, may be indifferent to the kind of program evaluation that provides a training staff with material for modifying and improving services. In addition, those who study a program may require continuity in service patterns for satisfactory evaluations and may therefore resist modifications. To the research staff, a failure may supply knowledge, whereas the action personnel, who may have to provide proof of effectiveness in order to keep the supply of funds flowing, tend to regard such knowledge as subversive.

One important exception to the general pattern of poorly-conceived research is the plan for evaluating the Job Corps. The scheme calls for two types

of control groups: (1) five-hundred youth with characteristics similar to those of Corpsmen but enrolled in other employment programs; and (2) another group of comparable youngsters receiving no employment service at all. Plans appear to take cognizance of various types of outcomes of service: average yearly earnings five years after leaving the program, gains in basic education, improvement of skills, and changes in attitudes. In addition to evaluation of the progress of individual Corpsman, the design entails assessment of the impact of various parts of the educational and training curriculum. Preliminary reports, however, suggest that despite the careful planning for evaluation, there is difficulty in collecting the data upon which such analyses are based.

Assessment of Current Youth-Employment Efforts

In this brief assessment, one might deal with program evaluation, in which case the emphasis would be on the manner in which program goals were implemented rather than defined. One would discuss such issues as: the organizational rivalries and consequent lack of coordination among the agencies responsible for the various pieces of the poverty program; the hastily-conceived projects of the Neighborhood Youth Corps; the large scale of some of the Job Corps' centers which, in the opinion of one observer, inevitably leads to the regimentation for which these facilities have been rated; the extent to which disadvantaged groups such as repeated youthful offenders are being accepted for service in various programs; and the debate between the universities and the corporations over the balance of educational and vocational training in the Job Corps. One could, on the other hand, cope with the question of whether these programs, if impeccably implemented, could alleviate youth unemployment. Since even the most well-staffed and well-designed programs like Mobilization for Youth appear to fall short of this goal, it seems more important to deal with conception rather than implementation.

Although many more programs have been initiated since the NCEY study of 1962-63, disadvantaged youth are still regarded by planners of these services as uneducated, unmannered, unmotivated, and unemployable. They need to be groomed for unskilled service jobs or taught toe-hold skills. Even when we train them for jobs thought to be in demand, we have usually failed to seek clearcut answers to the key question of whether they will be hired for these jobs. For example, it is generally assumed that auto mechanics are greatly in demand. Yet, as Seymour Lesh reports in a recent study, The Recruitment and Training of Automobile Mechanics, there does not seem to be a need for auto mechanics, per se, but rather for "highly-qualified," "competent" mechanics. There is actually an oversupply of less-skilled mechanics. What employers seem to want is an ideal employee: a young man with college potential between twenty-three and twenty-five with five to eight years of experience and training -- in short, not a Job Corps graduate. Current methods of conducting skill surveys and job-vacancy surveys to determine demand have been criticized. Specifically, it has been noted that such efforts often fail to make a distinction between the employer's job description and the actual (as opposed to the stated) requirements for performing the job.

In concerning themselves with training, either general preparation for work or occupational skills, programs have overlooked an important phenomenon that was observed in Getting Hired, Getting Trained, a study of hiring practices in three cities. Such variables as age, lack of high-school diploma, discrimination, and active draft status were important reasons why youth were not hired, regardless of their specific job skills.

Some trainees may be hired after their enrollment, not because they are more skilled but because they will have attained the age requisite for getting hired. Particularly for the group of young workers under eighteen who, experts stress, have different problems and hence require approaches different from those for older youth, the employment programs may serve as an "aging vat." That is, these programs provide an alternative to the floundering many youth experience between the time they leave school and they attain an age or stage when employment opportunities are more available to them. (Of course, nonwhite high-school graduates suffer comparable or higher rates of unemployment than both white and nonwhite dropout groups, which include more of the younger job seekers.) It could be argued that a permanent institution is needed for persons under twenty-one for whom work or higher education is unavailable. If so, such a third institution for youth should be differently defined and designed from programs whose goal is employability, even though some features of present employment programs may also serve the present and future needs of the youth for whom this institution would be developed.

The conceptual inadequacy of present solutions stems from the failure to recognize that employability is largely a function of the supply of jobs rather than of training. Eli Ginzberg, the manpower expert, has recently stated this position cogently: ". . . since the labor market always adjusts to the educational level of the population as a whole, there is little basis for the widespread contention that a lot of people are unemployed, primarily because they are uneducated or untrained."

The relationship of employability to employment opportunities may be observed in the operation of the selective-service system as well as in the civilian sphere. For example, the demand for more military personnel created by the war in Viet Nam has already led to a lowering of standards for the draft. The increase in the size of the armed services is expected to be 300,000 in fiscal 1966, bringing the total number of military personnel of the nation to 3,000,000 persons. The need for developing solutions to the problem of youth unemployment might be temporarily obscured if large numbers of persons who would be rejected in peacetime were to be employed in Viet Nam or as a result of that war. On the other hand, although the President has thus far resisted pressure to make sizeable cuts in anti-poverty expenditures, military means of removing youth from the labor force may surmount civilian programs like the Job Corps, if the war is expanded.

It is true that technological advances are eliminating many jobs for persons with a high-school education or less and creating increased demands for

other kinds of work. But these, according to Dr. Ginzberg, are a "wholly different set of jobs," requiring higher education, not skills training or general preparation for work. Clearly, the youth-employment programs do not train for this different set of professional and technical jobs.

In failing to define unemployment as the problem, we have devised strategies which deal with symptoms rather than causes of joblessness. It is true that employment programs have helped some youth to get jobs, but for reasons other than program input. That is, they are hired because program staff bludgeoned employers to hire their trainees, because they are older, or as a result of the prestige often accorded an innovating service. However, as the number of programs increase and the novel side-effects diminish, subsequent trainees will become relatively less employable than their predecessors; the latter at least had an advantage over the majority of their peers who were not enrolled in employment programs. As a result of inappropriate program conception, trainees will not necessarily be more employable even if programs succeed in imparting the designated skills or in achieving their training goals. The effect of programs might be, some experts have observed, a higher level of skill in the working population than is functionally necessary. The unemployables would be better trained and more demoralized.

In a work-oriented society with great areas of unmet needs, the approach to youth unemployment should be to increase employment opportunities rather than to train for too few jobs or to devise an aging vat. We need to make more work available to out-of-school youth either through creating new jobs or restructuring existing ones. Although concensus will more comfortably support services, necessity dictates social change--new jobs not job corps. One should also call for removal of arbitrary barriers to employment such as discrimination based on age or color, or for that matter, the requirement of a high-school diploma, vis-a-vis basic literacy, for blue-collar work. These unjust criteria are sometimes rapid but not relevant means of screening the over-abundant applicants for lower-level jobs. However, the removal of such barriers may result in the employment of different but not more young people unless alterations of hiring criteria are made in occupations where there are actual shortages in personnel.

It is unfortunate that despite the fact that enrollees in some programs are performing vital conservation and welfare functions, both the tasks and the workers are demeaned because their services are termed training or work-experience. If differently defined, however, some of the existing programs might provide bona fide employment instead of training or short-term work. We need to consider seriously "new careers for the poor" and other proposals for creating fuller employment.

G.S. Goldberg

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The bibliography on employment of youth represents an initial effort of the IRCD to compile a list of relevant literature on this subject and is not yet to be viewed as a definitive bibliography. Freedman's bibliography, a 1961 publication by the Taconic Foundation, is an important source of earlier works and influenced our approach to the organization of the bibliography which follows.

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